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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 005160

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINS](#) [PINR](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: DECEMBER 22 MEETING WITH IRAQI INTERIOR MINISTER

REF: BAGHDAD 5074 (AND PREVIOUS)

Classified By: Rule of Law Coordinator James Yellin for Reason 1.4 (d)

SUMMARY

1. (C) On December 22 Iraqi Minister of Interior Baqir Jabr told us that:

-- he supported the decision by the police chief of Babil Province to refuse to hire 800 recently nominated police recruits who were Badr Corps militiamen;

-- another 650 recruits had been appropriately vetted and sent for training;

-- Sunni election monitors reportedly arrested in the Baghdad districts of Amariya and Al-Jadida on December 22 must have been detained by Ministry of Defense (MOD) forces, because Ministry of Interior (MOI) forces do not operate in those neighborhoods.

2. (C) Jabr also said that he could not fire anyone at the MOI detention facility known as the Bunker until he had the report of the investigative committee headed by First Deputy Prime Minister Shaways. END SUMMARY.

BABIL POLICE RECRUITS

3. (C) On December 22 Embassy Rule of Law (ROL) Coordinator met with Iraqi Minister of Interior Baqir Jabr.

4. (C) Jabr told us that he supported the decision by the police chief of Babil Province to refuse to hire 800 of 1,450 police recruits recently nominated by the provincial council. Jabr said that these 800 recruits were Badr Corps militiamen, but that the remaining 650 had been appropriately vetted and sent for training.

DETAINED SUNNI ELECTION MONITORS

5. (C) Jabr said that Sunni election monitors who were reportedly arrested in the Baghdad districts of Amariya and Al-Jadida on December 22 must have been detained by MOD forces. He explained that MOI forces do not operate in these areas, which are controlled by MOD forces. (Iraqi Islamic Party member Mohammad Adnan Dulaymi told us that 57 Sunni election monitors had been detained but was only able to provide us with 12 names.)

6. (C) Jabr promised that if he found that any of the election monitors were in MOI custody, he would order their release unless they were being held on a lawful judicial order.

IRAQI COUNCIL FOR NATIONAL DIALOGUE DETAINEES RELEASED

7. (C) Jabr said that he had released four detainees on December 22 upon the request of Khalf Ayan Khalf, the Secretary General of the Iraqi Council for National Dialogue

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(a Sunni coalition). Jabr noted that he had released the four to reward the council for having encouraged Sunnis to participate in the December 15 elections.

BUNKER EMPLOYEES

8. (C) ROL Coordinator told Jabr that Iraqi and U.S. officials had visited the MOI detention facility known as the Bunker on December 17 and found MOI officials suspected of abusing detainees still present there. Jabr said he could not fire anyone at the Bunker until he had the results of an investigation headed by First Deputy Prime Minister Rowsh Shaways.

9. (C) Jabr also said that he would hold all Bunker personnel found guilty of misconduct accountable under the law. Jabr continued that some might be prosecuted in the courts, while others might be fired, demoted or transferred outside of Baghdad. (Jabr had earlier promised ROL

Coordinator that he would suspend Bunker employees suspected of wrongdoing pending the results of the Shaways investigation, and that he would fire anyone found guilty of wrongdoing.)

SUCCESSORS OF GRAND AYATOLLAH ALI AL-SISTANI

110. (C) ROL Coordinator thanked Jabr for inviting him to a lunch in Baghdad with Shia Ayatollah Hussein Ismail al-Sadr on December 15. Jabr replied that either al-Sadr or Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Said al-Hakim in Najaf would probably succeed Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani as the leader of the Iraqi Shia community.

111. (C) By way of background, Hussein al-Sadr, the most senior Shia cleric based in Baghdad, is a moderate who has met with Coalition personnel and promotes a tolerant brand of Islam. Al-Sadr is distant relative of firebrand cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, who favors the immediate withdrawal of Coalition forces from Iraq.

112. (C) In the Iraqi Shia hierarchy, Hussein al-Sadr is a notch below Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Saeed al-Hakim, the only Iraqi among the four Grand Ayatollahs based in Iraq (the other three are Iranian, Pakistani and Afghan). Al-Hakim is a distant relative of Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, the leader of the political party SCIRI.

113. (C) Our contacts generally say one of the four Grand Ayatollahs based in Najaf will succeed al-Sistani as the leader of the Iraqi Shia community.
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